

CHAPTER III

BEATRICE

A LONG jump, certainly, from Cranboium Street to Standish House in the Cotswolds, where Beatrice Potter was born on January 2nd, 1858. It was a large, white, rambling mansion ("more like an institution than a home") looking, from the windows at the front which faced south-west, over extensive flower gardens and the artificial water of the period, to the lovely valley of the Severn. A thoroughly Victorian house, the looms at the front were comfortably, even excessively, furnished, with heavy, shiny mahogany, drapery, carpets, cushions, ornaments and nick-nacks, but the children—nine girls, of whom Beatrice was the youngest but one—lived mainly in the sunless and stone-passaged regions at the back. Here were the school-room, the nurseries, the girls' bedrooms and those of their governesses, the single bath-room, as well as the smoke-room and the billiard-room of the master of the house.

But while Standish was the headquarters of the Potter family, they were, partly as a result of Mr Potter's business avocations, partly because the social status of a governing family of the period demanded the possession of several abodes, constantly on the move. "The restless spirit of big enterprise dominated our home life," Spring thus generally found them occupying a furnished house in London, where the girls "came out", in the summer, Rusland Hall in Westmorland, where Mr

Potter
another set of -timbei yaidis over had
above those in and